



Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022 **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by James Milligan MLA:

Reference: Hearing on 8 November, Annual Report of State of the Service 2021-2022

In relation to: Disability Employment

- (1) p.31-32 How many were enrolled in the Inclusion program? Only 2 made it through to permanent appointments in the ACT PS – why is this number so low?
- (2) p. 35 goals to employ people with disability – to 5% by 2026 – how far are you now?
 - a. P. 57 In the last AR you reported that you were at 2.9% and that number hasn't changed? Why not?
- (3) There are 1 in 5 people living with some form of disability in the ACT, why is the number of people with a disability working in the ACTPS still so low?
 - a. P. 57 Why is it so low in 2 key areas, education and Health? 2.4 and 1.8% respectively – which has remained unchanged since last reporting period?
 - b. P. 65 Only an extra 24 employed this year rising from 763 to 787. When you consider there are 27,132, an increase from 26,141 last reporting period, or almost 1000 additional PS in that time, this is a very small number. Why?
- (4) In previous years, numbers were included about part time and temporary part time status. How many are part time?
 - a. Why is this no longer being reported?
- (5) Why is there a gender pay gap for those employed living with a disability (p. 65)?
 - a. Why is there a pay gap in the median salary (p. 57)?
 - b. This gap was negligible according to the 2017/18 AR, why is it growing again. Is a review planned of these gaps to ensure this is appropriately addressed?
- (6) At what level are people working with a disability being employed?

Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

- (1) Two participants who identify as people with disability enrolled in the ACTPS Vocational Employment Program 2020-22. Both successfully completed their programs and progressed to

permanent employment. Recruitment for this program unfortunately coincided with the commencement of Public Health Emergency Declaration orders in March 2020, subsequent lockdowns and COVID associated restrictions hampered program planning and operations. The Vocational Employment Program underwent a full evaluation in early mid-2022. Key steps have been taken to scope and plan improvements to the program for 2023, with a focus on developing a refreshed program value proposition for both directorates and participants.

Over the last two years, the ACTPS has centrally funded other career development opportunities and courses for employees who are people with disability. Six employees with disability were funded to undertake Queensland University of Technology's prestigious Public Sector Management Program. Four employees with disability were funded to undertake the Disability Leadership Institute's Future Leaders program which focuses on helping people with disability develop their leadership potential. Further, the ACTPS commenced a pilot Neurodiversity Program in partnership with Specialisterne and Community Services Directorate.

- (2) At end 2021-22, 2.9% of the ACTPS workforce identify as people with disability (787 individuals). In November 2022, the number of people with disability in the ACTPS is 2.9% of the total workforce (792 individuals).
 - a. While the proportion of the workforce that identify as people with disability has not grown, there are slightly more individuals employed since the end of the last reporting period.
- (3) There is currently ongoing work to further understand the representation of people with disability through ACTPS workforce data. Coexisting data indicates that the proportion of the ACTPS workforce who are people with disability may be higher than 2.9%, with the-2021 ACTPS Staff Survey showing that 5.4% of survey respondents identified as a person with disability.
 - a. ACTPS Directorates are actively working towards enhancing workforce diversity and inclusion. For example, in 2021–22, **Canberra Health Services** developed a Disability Action and Inclusion Plan, with the support of the Australian Network on Disability and ACT Disability Reference Group. The development process included extensive consultation with Canberra Health Services staff, the ACT community and non-government organisations to inform the content of the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan. The draft plan has been finalised and will be officially launched in late 2022. **ACT Health Directorate** established the People with Disability Staff Network this reporting period, as an initial step towards developing a People with Disability Inclusion Framework and Workforce Inclusion Plan. The **Education Directorate** holds a Disability Action Plan (launched in 2019), and in 2021-22 introduced the Disability Advocacy Network intranet page as a central point of reference for staff and managers for information, policy and guidelines, and opportunities available. It also engaged 'Let's Talk Disability' to deliver a session to directorate staff and senior executives on engaging in more inclusive practices that support equitable participation in the workplace.
 - b. Disclosing information about disability status to an employer is a personal choice. Some may be cautious to disclose at the point of recruitment due to negative past experiences in other workplaces. This affects the way the community is represented in workforce data. ACTPS recognises that ongoing promotion of its inclusive workplace cultures will further encourage more self-identification. To enable this, in 2021-22, the ACTPS introduced a Key Performance Indicator to monitor and improve employee experiences of *inclusion*. The ACTPS is working towards 80% of staff agreeing their workplace is inclusive by 2025.
- (4) The Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Directions 2022 do not require inclusion of figures on part time employment and the employment status of employees with a disability.

(5) At the end of the 2021-22 reporting period, the ACTPS average male salary was \$103,560¹. The average salary of women with disability in the ACTPS was \$103,867. People with disability had a gender pay gap of -0.3%. This means that women with disability are paid slightly more than the average male salary in the ACTPS.

- a. In 2021-22, the median salary for people with disability was \$95,595 which is 0.2% less than the ACTPS median salary (page 57 2021-2 State of the Service Report). The ACTPS recognises that people with disability face barriers to employment throughout their lives and in Australian society and is actively working to address some of those societal and systemic issues.
- b. The ACT Government is committed to enhancing workforce diversity and inclusion, including to address gaps in representation. Much work is being planned to support the attraction and retention of people with disability, and to understand the nuances and fluctuations in trend data over time.

\$3.3m over the next four years had been committed to strengthen and expand diversity and inclusion within the ACT Public Service. The funding will drive strategy, programs, and resource development.

- a refreshed Vocational Employment Program and Neurodiversity Program is part of this body of work.

Other work that will support employees who are people with disability includes:

- developing progressive inclusion strategy to identify and address systemic barriers to inclusion.
- More education resources: Designing a central information hub to capitalise on existing networks, build stronger linkages across directorates and help reduce duplication in D&I activities across ACTPS.
- Targeted programs: Expanded range of workforce programs that engage diverse talent and assist career development.
- Enhanced evaluation: Strengthened evaluation and reporting capability based on sound data and analysis.

(6) In 2021-22, people with disability who occupied leadership positions was higher than the ACTPS average representation across the Service: 6.1% of executives and 4.2% of senior officers in the ACTPS identify as people with disability.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality

Signature:



Date: 21.11.22

By the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA

¹ The table of page 65 of the State of the Service Report 2021-22 details the ACTPS average salary (includes women, men and non-binary people). The gender pay gap is calculated by comparing the average salary of men to the average salary of women.